

Acculturation and Self-Construals of Greek Migrant Adolescents in Germany

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Introduction

Recent studies show that acculturative processes are still important in second and third generation migrants (ICSEY, 2004).

Also, self-construals seem to have an impact on acculturative processes. Singelis (1994) showed that self-construals and acculturative strategies (as mentioned by Berry and Sam, 1997) were interrelated. The closer the self-construals of acculturating individuals are to those of the host society, the easier is the acculturation process.

Study

The goal of this study was to explore differences and similarities in acculturation and self-construals of second and third generation Greek migrants in Germany.

It seems that third generation migrants can be either more or less acculturated than their second generation peers (Nauck, 1996). In the current study, however, the assumption was that the third generation should be more acculturated than the second generation.

Furthermore, we assumed that the third generation shows a more independent self than the second generation and vice versa with respect to the interdependent self. This assumption is based on predominantly independent self-construals in Germany and predominantly interdependent self-construals in Greece (Triandis & Vassiliou, 1972), and on the hypothesized more advanced acculturative process of the third generation as compared to the second generation.

Hypothesis 1

The third generation is (a) less involved in the culture of origin (Greek culture) and (b) more involved in the host society (Germany) than the second generation.

Hypothesis 2

The third generation shows (a) a more independent and (b) a less interdependent self-construal than the second generation.

A second part of hypotheses is concerned with interrelations between adolescent migrants' self-construals and their degree of acculturation (for both second and third generation):

Hypothesis 3

There is a positive relation between adolescents' interdependent self-construal and their involvement in the culture of origin (Greece).

Hypothesis 4

There is a positive relation between adolescents' independent self-construal and their involvement in the host society (Germany).

Method

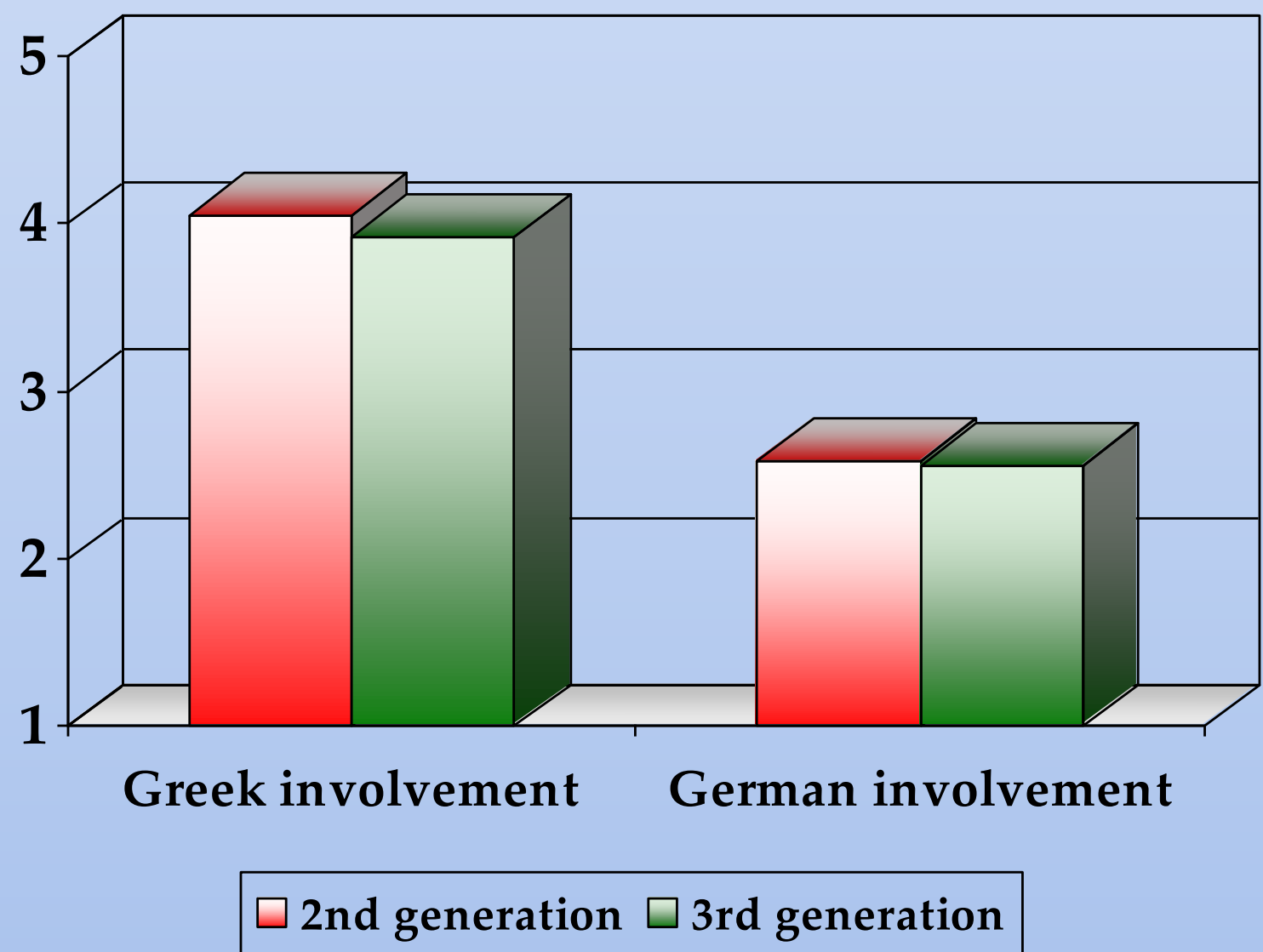
The sample consisted of N = 67 Greek adolescents (age M = 13.62 years) from the city of Stuttgart in Southern Germany. 34 were second generation, 33 third generation adolescents. The instruments used were the Acculturation Scale for Vietnamese Adolescents (ASVA, Nguyen & von Eye, 2002; adapted for the Greek sample) and the Self-Construal-Scale (SCS, Singelis, 1994). The subscales of the ASVA turned out to be reliable. Both, involvement in Greek culture ('Greek involvement') and involvement in German culture ('German involvement') had a Cronbach's alpha of .91. The Self-construal dimensions Interdependence and Independence showed alphas of .86 and .78.

Results

Mean Comparisons

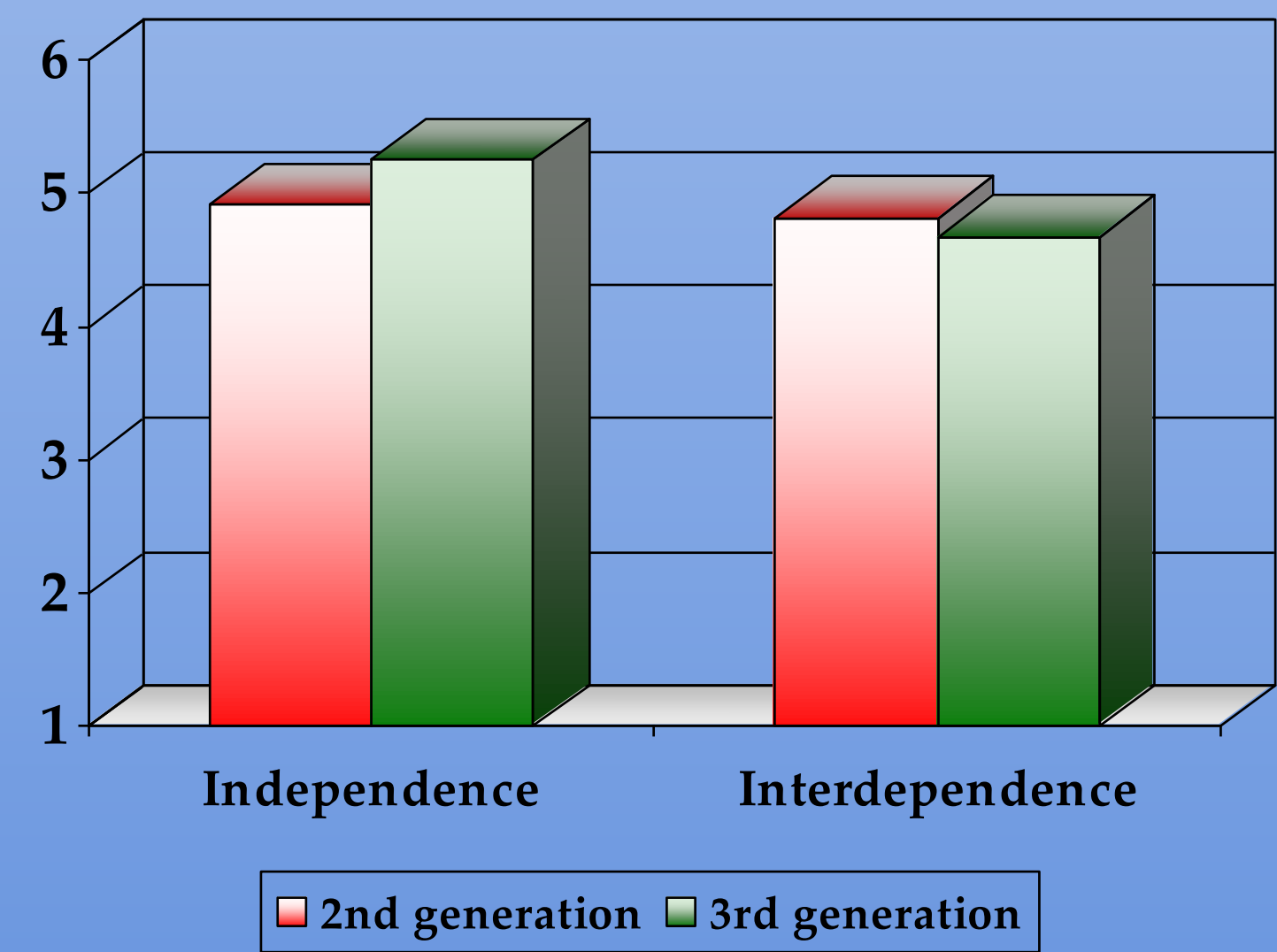
Results for Hypothesis 1 (a) and (b) were *non-significant*. Thus, the 2nd and 3rd generation did not significantly differ in either Greek involvement, $t(65) = .90$ and in German involvement, $t(65) = .26$ (Figure 1).

Figure 1 : Mean Comparison for the Involvement in Greek and German Culture of second and third generation adolescents.



No significant results were found either for **Hypothesis 2 (a) and (b)**: between 2nd and 3rd generation there was no significant difference in interdependence, $t(65) = -1.44$ and independence, $t(65) = .59$ (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Mean comparison for the Independence and Interdependence of second and third generation adolescents.



Correlation Analysis

As there was a **positive correlation between interdependence and Greek involvement Hypothesis 3 can be accepted** (Figure 3). The correlation found between Greek involvement and independence, however, was unexpected.

Figure 3: Intercorrelation matrix of the used scales

**p<.05		ASVA - Subscales		SCS - Dimensions	
		Greek involvement	German involvement	Interdependence	Independence
ASVA-Subscales	Greek involvement	1	-.50**	.24**	.33**
	German involvement		1	.07	-.06
SCS-Dimensions	Interdependence			1	.68**
	Independence				1

No correlation was found between the self construal-dimensions and German involvement. Therefore, **Hypothesis 4 had to be rejected**. The high positive inter-correlation of the SCS – Dimensions ($r = .68^{**}$) was not expected as well. Finally, German involvement and Greek involvement were highly negatively correlated.

Conclusions

The second and third generation of Greek migrant adolescents in Germany did not differ with respect to their involvement in Greek as well as in German culture, and they also did not differ with respect to interdependent and independent self-construals. **However, both generations were much more involved in Greek culture than in German culture.** Only the involvement in Greek culture was related to adolescents' self-construals – independent as well as interdependent. Thus, for both the second and the third generation adolescents in Germany Greek identity is very strong – at least at this point of their development – and it is important for their self-concept. On the contrary, **German identity is rather weak in both generations and irrelevant for adolescents' self-construals.**

References

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